



The GDLS Pandur fires at Baum Range. This vehicle has been fielded by Spain, Belgium, Kuwait, Slovenia and Austria. Photo by Jon Clemens

Soldiers Try Out Medium Armor In Fort Knox Demonstrations

General Eric Shinseki's controversial plan to create lighter, more deployable brigades moved a step closer at Fort Knox this winter with the arrival of 35 vehicles for a Platform Performance Demonstration (PPD). The Chief of Staff of the Army's vision calls for the Army to acquire medium armored vehicles that are deployable by C-130 or larger transports and capable of getting to the world's trouble spots ready to fight on arrival.

During the PPD, soldiers from Fort Knox, Fort Benning, Fort Lewis, and Fort Leonard Wood had a chance to drive, shoot, and swim the vehicles, which were supplied by eleven manufacturers. The intent was to find out if suitable vehicles for the new brigade would be available "off the shelf," so that these new formations can be created quickly. The vehicle types required include reconnaissance vehicles, infantry carriers, mobile gun systems, antitank vehicles, and platforms for mortars, command and control, engineer teams, and battlefield ambulances. The demonstrations included driving, live fire exercises, deployability by C-130, rail, and HET, tactical movement, both cross-country and in urban areas, and swimming capability.

The PPD, intended to educate the Army about what's available, also gave soldiers



General Eric K. Shinseki, Chief of Staff of the Army, talks to some of the soldiers who were assigned to try out the equipment in the Platform Performance Demonstration.

the opportunity to tell manufacturers' representatives how their vehicles might be improved. In addition to U.S. firms, manufacturers from France, Turkey, Canada, Germany, Singapore, and Switzerland participated.

Combat developers observed the demonstrations to assess each vehicle's adaptability to the new brigades and its

potential for the insertion of new technology to improve its capabilities.

The Chief of Staff's vision calls for the ability to put a combat brigade on the ground anywhere in the world within 96 hours, a division within 120 hours, and five divisions in 30 days.

- Jon Clemens



At left, this Armored Gun System (AGS) vehicle, seen coming down the ramp of a C-130, has the Level I (of three) possible levels of armor protection.

An MTVL, with a one-man turret, is driven onto a heavy equipment transporter as part of the deployability demonstrations.



A GDLS Dragoon has emerged from the water in this view of the swim exercise area.



At left, the TPZ Fuchs, from Germany, emerges from a C-130 during deployability demonstrations. This armored personnel carrier is the same chassis as the Army's Fox NBC detection vehicle.



A French VAB armored personnel carrier is chained into place on a rail car during the deployability demonstration.



The LAV III assault gun variant, at left, fires its pedestal-mounted 105-mm cannon at Baum Range.

Photos by Robert L. Stevenson



Soldiers familiarize on the LAV 300 Mark II, one of the infantry fighting vehicles being demonstrated.

Below, the Bionix 25, an infantry fighting vehicle from Singapore, mounts the firing ramp to demonstrate its capabilities with its 25mm gun fully depressed.



The Dragoon 4x4 APC with 25mm turret, above, fires downrange during the live-fire portion of the demonstrations.



The LAV III with 120mm turreted, breech-loading mortar speeds by during the basic driving demonstration.

Editor's Note: Space did not permit inclusion of photos of all 35 vehicles that participated in the PPD.



An XM 1117 takes the plunge, demonstrating its fording capability.